

MINUTES

OF AN

ASSOCIATION

OF

General Baptist MINISTERS,

AND

REPRESENTATIVES OF CHURCHES,

HOLDEN AT

WIMESWOULD, LEICESTERSHIRE,

June 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 1799.

London:

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1800.

MINUTES, &c.

THE Association met at Six o'Clock on *Tuesday Evening*
—Appointed

DAN TAYLOR, Chairman.

JOHN TARRATT, }
SAMUEL DEACON, } Moderators.

JOHN BISSIL, }
ROBERT GOODACRE, } Scribes.

Various Letters, Statements, and Cases from the Churches were read and considered, 'till Nine o'Clock.

Met on *Wednesday Morning*, at Seven o'Clock, and proceeded to read the other States and Letters of the Churches. Brother William Taylor opened the Meeting by prayer.

At Ten o'Clock met for public Worship, Brother FELKIN prayed; Brother S. DEACON preached from 1 Cor. i. 23. "We preach Christ crucified." At Two in the Afternoon Brother D. TAYLOR preached from Rom. xv. 19. "From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."

At Six in the Evening met again for business; Brother SMEDLEY, Sen. prayed; attended to business till Nine.

Thursday Morning met at Seven o'Clock for business. Brother BRIGGS prayed; attended to business 'till Nine. Brother William Shipston concluded with prayer.

Met again at Ten o'Clock, Brother T. EWEN prayed; attended to business 'till One o'Clock; Brother BRIGGS concluded by prayer. Met again at Two o'Clock; Brother SMEDLEY, jun. opened the business by prayer; attended to business till Five o'Clock. Brother GOADBY concluded by prayer.

Met at Six in the Evening, when Brother William TAYLOR of Barton, opened the Meeting by giving out a Hymn and prayer: Brother T. PICKERING delivered a discourse from James i. 25. "But who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Brother William TAYLOR concluded.

Met on *Friday Morning*. at Seven o'Clock, Brother POLARD prayed.

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

ASHFORD. More united than heretofore. Our church meetings have been conducted with pleasure---some of our members seem lively and active; while others appear too luke-warm and indifferent: we have preaching at five places: tolerably regular, and in general well attended at all of them, except Bradwell.

BARTON. State of religion far below the primitive standard, yet we hope many "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and one another with a pure heart fervently." We are well united as a church, and have a pleasing prospect about Balsen; and are in general pretty well attended with hearers. But we long to see many more "obey from the heart that form of doctrine which is delivered to them;" and our people in general, to shew forth by life and conversation the praise of the Redeemer, the excellency of the gospel, and the power of religion. We have the ordinance the first, and a church-meeting on the third Lord's day in every month at Barton; preaching at two in the afternoon, save on the ordinance day, which is at half past ten. We also preach at Balsen, (where we have erected a small chapel) Bosworth, Bagworth, Ratby, Congerton, and Odstone.

N. B. Barton church is divided since last Association, and has parted with about an hundred members (among whom are several of our most affluent and active) who are now connected together, under the name of the General Baptist church at Hugglescoat. Mr. Orton, pastor.

BIRCHESCLIFFE. Peace is prevalent among ourselves, through the Divine blessing; but wish to feel more of the real power of godliness. Well attended with hearers, and some concerned for their souls.

BOSTON. State of the church nearly as last year; too great indifferency among some, while we hope and trust others are pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus.---We wish to see a more general concern for the interest of religion among us, and practical godliness in particular.

BOURNE. The state of religion is low in this place, and has been so for many years; but we have reason to hope it is a little reviving, at least, in the hearts of those who profess it; we are peaceful and unanimous among ourselves, preaching at Bourne, Morton, and Castle Bytham. Brethren, pray for us.

BURNLEY. We are almost ashamed to call ourselves a church of Christ; not because we are few and poor, but because we have so little of the mind that was in Christ. We are pretty much the same as last year, have had no increase. Some of our members are injurious rather than useful, by their neglect of meetings; but we hope there are a few others who walk orderly, long and labour for a revival. Brethren, pray for us.

CAULDWELL. Much the same as last year.

CASTLE DONINGTON. The state of religion amongst us as a church, we hope, is rather more promising than last year. Yet, we fear some of our members are dead, while they profess to live; as they seem to mind their own things, and pay but little attention to the things of Jesus Christ. The exchange of ministers monthly and the revival of social meetings for prayer, &c. we think, have been useful additions to our usual supplies; but we are sorry to say, some of our friends never attend our private meetings, and scarcely ever week-day evening exhortations: may the Lord stir them up to see their duty and interest, and may those of a better description, never grow weary in well-doing.---We are not without our troubles, but, we enjoy, perhaps, as much tranquillity, as can be expected in such a world,---in such an age. May the Lord send down his good spirit upon the barren wilderness, that it may be a fruitful field.

CHURCH-LANE, WHITECHAPEL, LONDON. We are, in general, unanimous and peaceful among ourselves, and trust it may be said, with respect to the major part, that

that they "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" while we lament that we have reason to think otherwise of some. We have had some difficulties this year, but rejoice in the recollection, that God is our helper. Our honoured pastor has lately opened a small place for Divine worship at the hamlet of Mile-End, where we have preaching Lord's-day, and Wednesday evenings, and are well attended, especially on Lord's-day evenings.

DERBY. We have reason to lament the low state of religion amongst us at present; very few hearers, but trust we should have more, were we supplied with ministerial aid in constancy. We return thanks for the supplies we have received, and request a continuance of them, and, if possible, a constant supply of ministerial assistance. Brethren, pray for us. Preaching at Alverstone, on Lord's-day evenings, and tolerably attended.

GAMSTON AND RETFORD. The cause of Christ amongst us, at this time, is under a very dark cloud, occasioned by the lascivious conduct of some, and the luke-warmness of others; while (blessed be God) others are alive to God in their souls, and active in the Redeemer's cause. Ministers and preachings as last year. We entreat that the Association be at Retford next year. Brethren, pray for us.

GOSBERTON. Pretty well attended with hearers, particularly in the afternoon on the Lord's day; conference meetings every Lord's day, frequently four or five speakers; we find our two young men very useful: we are unanimous among ourselves, and, upon the whole, we hope that religion is on the advance.

HALIFAX. With troubled hearts we say religion is low amongst us. Luke-warmness and negligence being prevalent with many. Yet, God be praised, it is not so with all. Preachings and meetings nearly the same as usual; only, Lord's day evenings but once a fortnight, which are alternately kept up by brethren Ellis and Dean. We desire to see religion flourish universally, and particularly at Halifax. Brethren, pray for us.

HINKLEY. As a church we are unanimous and peaceable; but not so lively as we could wish. Too many trifling and indifferent, but of others we hope better things: numbers of hearers nearly the same as last year, except at Wokey, where we think there is an increase. We have this year had the misfortune to lose our pastor, brother Smith, by death.

HUG.

HUGGLES COATE. We are comfortable, well united, and trust the work of the Lord prospers in our hands; we preach at four places, and, in general, are well attended with hearers at them all.

ILKISTON. We hope many amongst us are sincere and diligent in attending the means of grace, and earnestly praying for the prosperity of Zion; but alas, others seem awfully inattentive to practical godliness! Several have lately turned aside to crooked paths, which gives us considerable grief and trouble; yet on the whole, we think we have great reason to adore the God of Israel, that we are "at peace amongst ourselves." Our season of public worship are well attended, and a few now desire to unite with us in celebrating the ordinances of his house.

KEGWORTH. We have been, and still continue, to be exercised with difficulties, which have occasioned the separation of several of our members, and much trouble among us. We continue to preach at five places, and are tolerably attended at all of them, except one. Brethren, pray for us.

KIRKBY WOODHOUSE. Regular preaching at four places, viz. Kirkby Woodhouse, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Hucknall Tarkard, and Brunstley; well attended with hearers, particularly at the two last, at which good has been done, and we are waiting in expectation of more. We trust many of our friends adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, in their conduct; but some we fear are the reverse. As a church we are united and peaceable, and, on the whole, we think the interest of Christ is rather on the advance.

KILLINGHOLM. Preaching and hearers nearly the same as last year; in general, peaceable and happy; some have the cause of God at heart, while others are prone to neglect. One candidate for baptism, and others appear to be coming forward; we desire to be thankful for the means of grace enjoyed by us, and wish to have the Lord's Supper administered among us regularly, as we apprehend it would be greatly to our advantage. May God crown your meeting with his blessing!

KIRTON. We are sorry to remark that, as a church, we are not unanimous; the cause of our division being a point of scripture doctrine. Brethren, pray for us.

LOUGHBOROUGH. Since the awful death of brother Trueman, October 10th, 1797, our troubles amongst ourselves have been unspeakably great; which, with our very scanty supply of preaching, and other ministerial aid, has very much damped our zeal, and retarded the progress of the gospel in these parts. Brethren pray for us, that the Lord of the harvest
will

will shorten our days of mourning, by sending us a minister, whose labours he will bless to the revival and perpetuating of his cause amongst us.

LEAKE. Preaching at five places. We have no reason to complain respecting the number of our hearers on the Lord's day. Our week-day lectures are diligently attended by some, while others too evidently prove the coldness of their hearts by frequently neglecting these opportunities; upon the whole, we fear that religion is now lower amongst us than it has been in times past, notwithstanding the faithfulness of our beloved pastor. Too many of our brethren have wounded the cause of Christ and their own souls, by indulging their sensual appetites. The imprudent marriages of some, and the intemperance of others, are, we conceive, extremely prejudicial to our prosperity. We acknowledge with gratitude our last year's supply from Kegworth, which has been very acceptable in the absence of brother Biffell, who has been, during that time, under the care of brother Taylor, of London.

LEICESTER. We have reason to lament the low state of religion among us, and the discouraging prospects with respect to future increase. Our public services are much as usual, and our number of hearers nearly the same, except the week-day meetings, and meetings for prayer, which are sadly neglected.

LONGFORD. One stated and one assistant preacher. We are tolerably attended with hearers, except on Lord's day mornings, yet have much reason to complain of the absence of many of our members, not only from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, but also from church meetings, and other means of grace; carnal mindedness in some, want of wisdom, stability and charity in others, call for deep humiliation, and evidence the want of real religion. Yet we trust in our Sardis-like state we have a few who are zealous in promoting the truth in purity and love. Brethren, pray for us.

LONGWOOD. Numbers of our hearers, and state of religion much the same as last year; unanimous with regard to the admission of members.

MELBOURN. We are peaceful and harmonious, but want vital godliness and real piety; the disorderly conduct of some of our members causes much trouble and reproach. That branch of our church meeting at Packington, have lately invited brother Goadby to be their minister. He has agreed to come and labour among them for one year upon trial; but they are not yet become a separate church of themselves. Regular preaching at six places, and tolerably attended at most of them. Our week-day evening meetings are not so well attended.

attended as to give evidence that we possess the Psalmist's disposition, when he says, "My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord."

NOTTINGHAM. This year we have been exercised with considerable discouragements, occasioned partly by the death of valuable members, and partly by the sad defect of some others. Yet we trust God is with us. Preaching and hearers nearly as usual; several candidates for baptism. We have long laboured under great discouragement on account of the condition and situation of our meeting-house; and this summer we have begun to build another, which we expect will be finished in a few weeks; and hope the advantages arising from this undertaking will be long experienced by the congregation of General Baptists in this town and neighbourhood. As the expence attending this building will necessarily be very considerable, we shall be much obliged to our friends if they will lend us their assistance as soon as possible.

QUEENSHEAD. Preaching twice on the Lord's day, and some times on a week day; church meetings and other meetings nearly as in past time. The uncommonly severe and long winter has prevented all our meetings from being so well attended; yet now we have a considerable number of hearers. We have had more uneasiness through difference of sentiment and want of unanimity the last year than ever we had before, yet, we hope, it has been, through the divine blessing, made to work for the real and spiritual benefit of some of us. We desire an interest in your prayers.

SHORE. Religion on the advance we hope, and we, peaceable and happy. Well attended with hearers in the afternoon, considering the place. We have lately ordained brother Spencer, pastor over us, which we hope will be of great use. Brethren, pray for the prosperity of Zion on our barren hills.

SPALDING. But few hearers at present. Preaching morning and afternoon on Lord's day; for the greatest part of the year, an evening lecture in the week, prayer meetings twice a week. Yet we hope religion is rather on the advance, and we sincerely bless God that we are at peace amongst ourselves. Brethren, we request your prayers.

WISBEACH. Our present prospect is gloomy, as we are about to lose our pastor; But God, who is able to bring real good out of apparent evil, is able to supply all our wants. Brethren, pray for us, and help us.

C A S E S

FROM THE CHURCHES.

BURNLEY CASE. We trust we have a thankful remembrance of past favours, and hope when opportunity serves and duty calls, we shall be willing to give according to our ability, though at present we are better qualified for receiving than for giving. Our meeting-house is yet forty pounds in debt, the interest of which we pay with great difficulty; and yet in six months we are required to pay off all, both interest and principal. Now we wish to know what method you think we had best take to get the money in so short a time. We have also a good house adjoining the meeting-house, which cost a hundred pounds. This will go from us the first of next January, if not redeemed before. With respect to the debt of the meeting-house, we wish to try to collect the money, and pay it off this year. If you can encourage us, we shall be glad to know as soon as possible. In regard to the dwelling-house, we think it is very desirable to have it at our own disposal, as long as we have the meeting-house; for if it is not redeemed we know not into whose hands it may fall. Now if you think it had better be redeemed, and suppose that we cannot procure the money, are any of you able and willing to produce it, and accept a surrender of the premises for security?

Ans. Burnley Case is referred to the Yorkshire Conference. It is as follows: We advise our friends at Burnley to dispose of the meeting-house, &c. &c. and that they lay the case before the Yorkshire Conference, and act in the business, according to the express direction of that Conference.

CASE II. (From HUGGLESCOTE.) We having separated from Barton Church, upon certain conditions proposed and agreed to by us and by them when we were united in one Church; desire to know the opinion of this Association, whether either Church has a right, without the consent of the other, to recede from, or to alter those agreements, ratified by both, when we were united in one Church?---

Ans. No.

CASE III. (From KIRTON.) Is it scriptural for a person, who is an assistant preacher, to go to preach to a people who refuse to be a part of the Church to which he belongs, and also refused the pastor he is under, either to preach or administer the Lord's supper amongst them?

B

Ans.

Ans. We think there may be circumstances in which this may be consistent with scripture, if practised in a peaceable manner.

CASE IV. The old General Baptist Church at KNIPTON, Leicestershire, request the assistance of the Association in procuring a minister, who might be eligible to settle amongst them.

Ans. It does not appear that a suitable person can be pointed out to our brethren at Knipton; we therefore advise them to make application to the neighbouring Churches for that supply which is necessary, until a suitable person may be found.

CASE V. The minor Church at LEICESTER having found some difficulty in stating their case to the Churches, in order to their admission into the Connection, as they were advised last Association; again renew their application to become a branch of the General Body.

Answer to Leicester Minority. The case being some time attended to, and several observations being made upon it, it appeared to us necessary, to prevent some disagreeable consequences which were apprehended, that they should be again advised to take the steps which were last year recommended.

CASE VI. (FROM WISBEACH.) Requesting a minister to settle amongst them.

Ans. Several ministers in the Connection have engaged to supply the Church at Wisbeach, at least one Lord's day in a month.

CASE VII. (FROM SUTTON, a Branch of Kegworth.) Requests the opinion of the Association respecting the propriety of their separation from Kegworth Church, since some existing circumstances seem to render their longer union impracticable.

Ans. After a long conversation on the state of Kegworth Church, in its several branches, and its disagreeable circumstances, we do not apprehend that a separation is necessary, or likely to prove advantageous. But if the Church, or any branch of it, be persuaded of the contrary, they must be considered at liberty to act according to their best judgment; yet we advise them to do nothing rashly, and, to the utmost of their power, to "follow the things that make for peace, and things by which one may edify another."

CASE VIII. (FROM QUEENSHED.) The brethren at Queenshead request the assistance of the Churches, under their pressing circumstances, to assist them in defraying the expences which have been necessarily incurred by erecting a gallery in their meeting-house.

Ans.

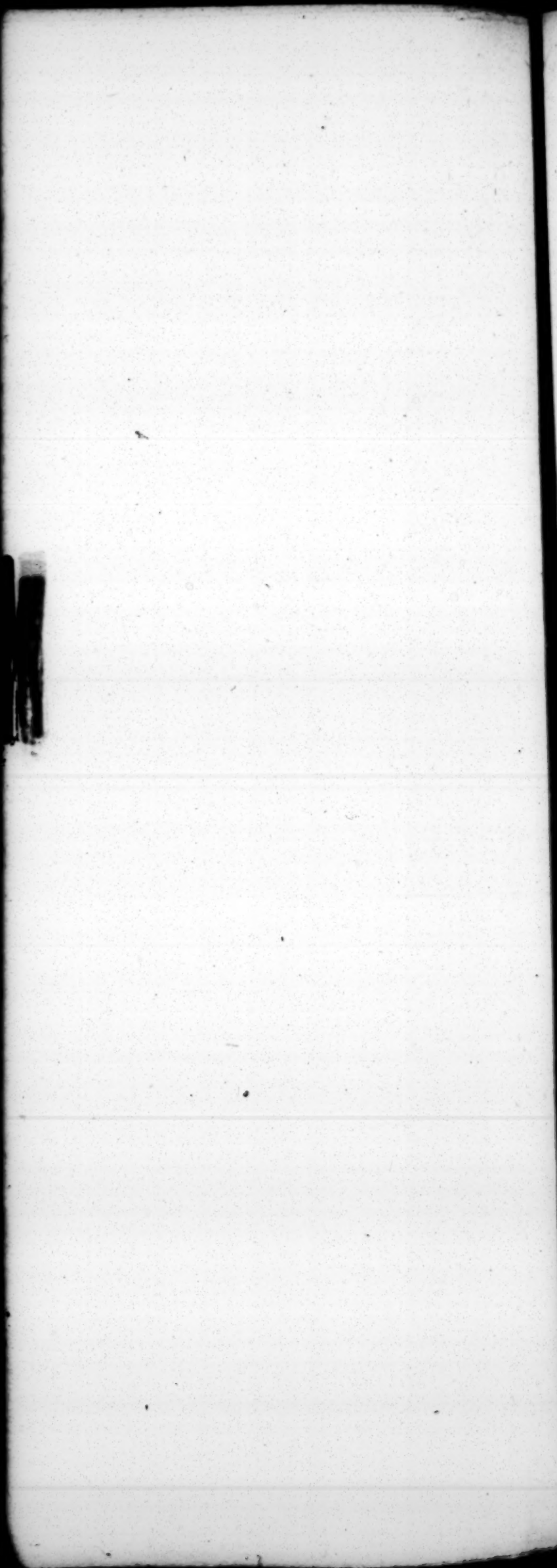
Ans. We advise our Queenshead brethren to state their cases to those Churches that have not relieved them.

CASE IX. The Church of Christ at MARCH, in Lincolnshire, has requested to be admitted into our Connection, without applying to the Churches in the usual way.

Ans. It is the opinion of this Association, that it would be more eligible to write to our Churches in the usual way.

CASE X. The brethren at NOTTINGHAM request the assistance of the sister Churches in defraying their expences in erecting their meeting-house.

Ans. We recommend it to our respective Churches to take the case of the Church at Nottingham into their consideration, and to assist them as early as they can make it convenient.



LIST OF THE CHURCHES.	Members	Baptized	Removed to	Reford	Dismissed from	Excluded	Withdrawn	Dead	REPRESENTATIVES OF CHURCHES.	Pastors	Unordained Min.
Ashford, Derbyshire	25	—	—	1	1	—	1	—	Samuel Thorpe	—	—
Barton, Leicestershire	167	24	—	1	—	1	—	3	S. Deacon, jun. J. Brewin, J. Goadby	2	2
Birmingham, Warwickshire	74	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Boston, Lincolnshire	93	—	—	—	2	—	—	2	William Taylor	1	—
Bourn, Lincolnshire	13	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	Joseph Binns	1	—
Burnley, Lancashire,	18	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	A Letter and Cafe	1	1
Birchcliffe, Yorkshire	67	1	—	2	—	3	—	—	A Letter	1	—
Cauldwell, Derbyshire	49	4	—	—	—	—	—	1	James Norton	1	—
Castle-Donington, Leicestershire	137	3	—	1	1	2	1	—	Thomas Pickering and J. Bakewell	1	—
Church-lane, Whitechapel, London	222	11	—	—	1	3	—	6	D. Taylor	1	4
Derby	28	—	—	1	—	3	1	—	Joseph Barrow	—	—
Garnston & Retford, Nottinghamshire	76	—	—	1	3	4	—	2	John Smedley and Wm. Shipston	—	2
Gosberton, Lincolnshire	35	3	—	—	3	—	—	1	Charles Briggs	1	2
Halifax, Yorkshire	37	1	—	1	—	—	3	1	Joseph Ellis	1	1
Hinckley, Leicestershire	144	1	—	—	—	7	—	7	John Shipman	—	2
Hugglescoate, Leicestershire	100	5	—	1	—	—	—	3	T. Orton, Jac. Newberry, G. Dean, W. Holmes, John Newberry, Tho. Wait, and T. Branfon	1	—
Ilkinston, Notts.	150	15	2	—	—	5	4	1	William Felkin and William Twells	—	—
St. Ives, Huntingdonshire	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Kegworth, Leicestershire	142	—	3	—	3	9	—	2	John Tarrat, Richard Crane, John Jerom, and Joseph Hewney	1	2
Killingholm, Lincolnshire	56	3	—	1	—	—	2	1	William Smedley	—	4
Kirkby-wood-house, Nottinghamshire	60	10	—	—	2	1	1	2	George Hardstaffe and Edward Allen	—	1
Kirton, Lincolnshire	42	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	A Letter and three Cafes	1	—
Leake, Nottinghamshire	242	9	2	3	—	1	1	2	Richard Thurman, John Biffill, &c.	1	2
Leicester	72	—	—	—	3	3	—	3	John Deacon	1	—
Longford, Warwickshire	133	5	—	2	—	—	1	1	John Cramp and William Jarvis	1	1
Longwood, Yorkshire	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	A Letter	—	1
Loughborough, Leicestershire	394	—	—	—	3	15	2	13	B. Pollard and Joseph Johnson	1	—
Maltby, Lincolnshire	47	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Melbourn, Derbyshire	314	21	—	2	—	5	1	6	William Hames and Thomas Robinson	1	3
Nottingham	274	18	7	2	4	9	1	12	Robert Smith and Samuel Heard	1	1
Queenshead, Yorkshire	63	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	James Taylor	1	1
Shore, Yorkshire	10	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	A Letter	1	—
Spalding, Lincolnshire	22	4	3	1	—	—	—	—	John Bartol	1	—
Tid St. Giles, Lincolnshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wisbeach, Cambridgeshire	37	1	—	—	3	1	4	—	A Letter and Cafe	1	—
	3385	143	17	20	29	72	24	71		25	32